REPORT OF THE YOUTH EMERGENCY SHELTER

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT PANEL

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Table of Contents

		PAGE
A.	Glossary of Terms	ii
B.	Preamble	iii
C.	Summary of Recommendations	iv
1.0	Background	1
2.0	Panel Membership	2
3.0	Panel Objectives	2
4.0	Activities Undertaken	3
5.0	Introduction to Findings	4
6.0	Observations, Conclusions and Recommendations	6
	6.1 Investigation and Analysis of Child Care Concerns	6
	6.2 Investigation and Analysis of Management Concerns	14
	6.3 Community Relationships with the Shelter	20
	6.4 Relationship with Government and Other Community Service Agencies	24

Appendix A: Terms of Reference

A. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

The following is an explanation of the major terms used throughout this report:

A.F.S.S.	-	The Department of Alberta Family and Social Services
Board	-	Refers to the Youth Emergency Shelter Society Board of Directors
CR.AS.H.	-	Crisis, Assistance and Hostelling Program
Panel	-	Refers to the Youth Emergency Shelter Society Program Development Panel
Shelter	-	Refers to the Youth Emergency Shelter
ST.A.R.T.	-	Stabilize, Assess, Refer, Transition Program
U.W.	-	United Way of Edmonton and Area
Y.E.S.S.	-	Youth Emergency Shelter Society

B. PREAMBLE

Serving homeless youth is a major challenge for our communities. At a time when most young people are still safe and secure in a home environment, some youth are on their own. The 16 and 17 year olds admitted to the Youth Emergency Shelter are in this latter group. At the time of admission, many of them have accumulated negative life experiences far beyond what one might expect for their chronological age. In far too many cases, the scars left by these experiences present a major obstacle to the achievement of successful independence and responsible adulthood.

Unfortunately we are not talking about a small group of youth. Young people come to the Shelter at the rate of several hundred each year. The nature and degree of their life problems make them a difficult group to serve, especially in a short period of time. It is both the numbers of homeless youth, and the severity of their individual needs, that make the Shelter a difficult program to operate.

Given this context, and having the benefit of an earlier program review undertaken by the Shelter's Board of Directors, the Program Development Panel approached its task with the knowledge that the Shelter had experienced operational problems both internally and in its surrounding community. Given the nature of its mission this is not surprising. The objective of the Panel was to assist the Shelter's Board of Directors in addressing concerns in order to enhance and further develop a much needed program in the Edmonton community.

It is hoped that the implementation of the recommendations in this report will help the Shelter in its future development. Indeed, Panel members noted many positive changes at the Shelter since the original concerns were raised, and the Board has initiated action plans to address other issues. This report should be reviewed in the context of a program with insufficient operating resources, as this was the conclusion of both Panel members and other external reviewers. Not all of the needed additional resources are related to direct funding. Some take the form of additional service support required from both Government and other community agencies.

During the course of this review, the Panel members were most impressed with the commitment of volunteers, staff members (both past and present), management, and the Board of Directors at the Youth Emergency Shelter. While individuals from these groups have not always agreed on issues involving the Shelter, they are clearly united in their concern for homeless youth and in their desire to see the best possible services for these young people.

C. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Shelter (perhaps with the assistance of a records management expert) review and revise the format of its "client files" to improve information storage and retrieval, and to more effectively support staff activity on behalf of the youth being served. In doing this it is suggested:

   - there be some form of "face sheet" that contains key information about each youth, which contains a summary of key events or decisions respecting that youth, and which can be updated with any succeeding admission;

   - there be a health record which is readily accessible; which contains all known health information and which contains the record of all medication prescribed and administered;

   - there be a method of recording identified youth needs, of describing how these needs will be addressed (including what the youth will do to meet his/her own needs), and of describing whether the needs were met;

   - there be a requirement, and method , for supervisors and management to record follow-up activity vis a vis incident reports.

2. That the Shelter have an on-site line supervisor on each child care shift to provide staff with consistent guidance and support, clear communication of service expectations, and a problem-solving mechanism for both administrative and child care issues. This will also enhance consistency of interpretation and application of agency philosophy, policies and procedures for each shift and between shifts.

3. That the Shelter institute a specific policy requiring file documentation describing what approach will be used to support youth who are known to be sexually active and/or to be vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

4. That the Shelter follow through with its stated intent to expand Shelter policies and procedures regarding the correct dispensing of medication, and to institute a monitoring process to ensure staff compliance with all policies and procedures regarding the management and dispensing of medication.

5. That the Shelter involve the Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) and the Local Board of Health to assist in a review of their health care program as it relates to meeting the health needs of adolescents.

   Additionally, that the Shelter enlist the involvement of a physician, who has a particular interest and expertise in providing health care to adolescents, in its ongoing program.

6. That the Shelter seek the assistance of Alberta Mental Health to negotiate and establish protocols with one or more of Edmonton's active treatment hospitals regarding treatment of Shelter youth with mental health needs and particularly those residents who are suicidal.

7. That the Shelter institute:

   - an assessment approach that will readily assist identification of Shelter youth needs and that would be completed at intake;

   - expanded daytime and evening programming that would include both short-term programs directed to meeting youth needs (e.g., job assessment, job preparation courses), and recreation activities.

8. That the Shelter approach Edmonton Community and Family Services for assistance with family mediation and family reconciliation activities.

9. That the Shelter increase the ratio of Shelter staff to residents; establish 25 as the maximum number of CR.AS.H residents; ensure that staff qualifications are consistent with expected roles and responsibilities.

In conjunction with the above, it is further recommended:

- that the Edmonton Region, Alberta Family and Social Services, ensure other accommodation options are available to youth when the Shelter is at full occupancy;

- that the Edmonton Region, Alberta Family and Social Services, the United Way of Edmonton and Area, and Edmonton Community and Family Services meet with the Board to review the funding needs of the agency.

10. The Panel supports the plans of the Board currently to initiate an operational review of the Shelter's management structure using an external facilitator. The Panel suggests that the review adopt a participatory approach to the review and involve the major stakeholders for the Shelter (eg. Shelter staff, Alberta Family and Social Services representative, United Way representative). Furthermore, the Panel recommends that the following issues be included in the review: (1) type of organizational structure that is best suited for aiding the Shelter to achieve its goals; (2) clarification of the governance role of the Board and the management role of the Executive Director and; (3) a review of formal processes available to Shelter staff to access the Board.

12. That the Shelter institute changes to the human resources grievance procedure to allow the Board to make the final decision regarding a grievance action.

13. That the Board take part in a "Board development" exercise such as those provided by the Volunteer Action Centre, Grant MacEwan College or the Social Planning Council.

14. That the residents of the Shelter be provided with a formalized mechanism to provide feedback on the day to day activities of the Shelter to help the Shelter in their planning for the needs of the youth living there.

15. The Panel endorses the Shelter's commitment to undergo another Peer Review through the Alberta Association of Services for Children and Families within the next year.

16. That the Shelter pay greater attention to improving levels of understanding and creating an amicable, responsive relationship with the adjacent community that will better serve all parties. This should include tangible ways and means whereby youth can interact positively and helpfully within the community.

17. The Panel supports the decision reached during the Community/Shelter mediation meetings to develop a standing committee of Community/Shelter representatives including the "beat constable" to serve as a problem solving forum addressing concerns of mutual interest. The Panel encourages the Board to continue to take a leadership role in establishing the standing committee and recommends that the community adjacent to the Shelter select appropriate representatives to join the standing committee by the end of August, 1990.

18. The Panel supports the efforts of the Board to renovate the Shelter to improve the visual attractiveness of the building to the community and, where possible, to physically design features that will minimize negative interaction between Shelter residents and the adjacent community.

19. Despite efforts of the Shelter to provide some level of supervision and surveillance of Shelter residents while outside the confines of the Shelter, the community continues to express concerns about the negative impact the behaviour of Shelter residents (outside of the Shelter) has on this neighbourhood. The Panel recommends that resolutions to this problem be sought at the standing Community/Shelter committee.

20. That the Shelter develop a component to its orientation program for incoming residents that deals with the community and expected conduct and attitude towards that community while in its midst.

21. That the Shelter establish a permanent inter-agency coordinating committee to develop and maintain the appropriate network of services required by the youth at the Shelter. This committee should meet at least every two months and have representation from the relevant Provincial Government departments, the City of Edmonton, and appropriate community agencies. Membership should be made up from the management or senior program levels of the organizations involved.

22. That the Edmonton Region of Alberta Family and Social Services assign two staff, at the Casework Supervisor level, as liaison persons to the Shelter. One of these supervisors should represent the Child Protection program, the other should be assigned from the Social Allowance program (preferably a specialist with 16 and 17 year old youth). This liaison work should focus on the day-to-day coordination of services to Shelter youth who are already receiving Edmonton Region services, or are candidates for those services.

23. That the Solicitor General's Department consider assigning a staff member as a liaison person to the Shelter to better meet the needs of those youth living at the Shelter who also have involvement with the Solicitor General's Department.

24. That Alberta Family and Social Services review its relevant legislation, policies and practices for 16 and 17 year old youth who are "at risk" or "in need" to ensure that its services are appropriate, responsive and consistently applied in meeting the needs of this target population. It is further recommended that, in order to achieve improved integration of services, Alberta Family and Social Services undertake to involve in its review all those Provincial Departments that also provide services to this group of youth.

25. That the Panel members remain available to the Board to assist the various persons responsible for the implementation of recommendations identified in this report.

1.0 Background

On December 13, 1989, the Regional Director, Family and Social Services, Edmonton Region, received a letter from two former employees of the Youth Emergency Shelter bringing to his attention their concerns about the operation of the Shelter. Both former employees detailed concerns about "unprofessional child care practices", "inadequate client control", "a high degree of criminal activity on the part of clients", "inability to provide a place of safety and refuge for youth in crisis", and other unacceptable practices.

On January 2, 1990 the Regional Director wrote the President of the Shelter Board of Directors, indicating he had received correspondence from former employees expressing concerns about the program. The Regional Director indicated the review and investigation of these concerns was within the "purview and mandate of the Board". Through further discussions between the Board and the Regional Director, a review committee consisting of four Board members and two external representatives was formed to investigate the concerns of the two former staff members.

The review committee completed an investigation and prepared a report in response to the Regional Director's January 2, 1990 letter which integrated findings and recommendations of all reviewers and which was co-signed by all parties to the review. On February 28, 1990 this report was released to the public.

Because some concerns remained regarding the Shelter's operation, and as a mechanism to assist the Shelter to implement changes, the Regional Director created a five member Program Development Panel. The Panel was expected to work with the Board in determining exactly where the problems were, developing action plans to deal with the problems, and then ensuring the implementation of those actions.

Concurrently, the community immediately adjacent to the Shelter had become concerned about the location and operation of the Shelter and expressed its displeasure through the media and to Edmonton City Council.

2.0 Panel Membership

The members of the Youth Emergency Shelter Society Program Development Panel included the following persons:

Mr. Denis Bell, Regional Director Alberta Family and Social Services	Chairperson
Mr. Bill Winship, Manager Services To Persons With Disabilities Alberta Family and Social Services	Co-Chairperson
Mr. John Lackey, General Manager Community and Family Services	Panel Member
Mr. John Mould, Northern Alberta Director Children's Advocate Alberta Family and Social Services	Panel Member
Mr. Hillel Boroditsky, Executive Director United Way of Edmonton and Area	Panel Member
Mr. Ary DeMoor, President Youth Emergency Shelter Society	Panel Member

Mr. Bell, Mr. Winship and Mr. Boroditsky were selected as Panel members because their respective agencies are major funders of the Shelter. Mr. Lackey was selected as a representative of the City of Edmonton, to provide insight into the community relations component of the issue. Mr. Mould, in his role of Children's Advocate, was selected to the Panel to bring focus to the issues as these affect the young people who utilize the Shelter, and Mr. DeMoor was selected to the Panel to provide information about the operations of the Shelter.

3.0 Panel Objectives

The Terms of Reference developed by the Panel are attached in Appendix A. The objectives of the Panel are listed as follows:

1. To ensure a thorough analysis and investigation of concerns raised by the former employees and to review the subsequent actions of the Board of Directors.

2. To consider the community context of the Shelter program and to identify and review with the Board concerns expressed by other stakeholders (funders, community agencies, neighbours, officials of the City of Edmonton).

3. To review the working relationship between Alberta Family and Social Services and the Shelter program, including an analysis of the needs, appropriateness of referrals, etc. and to make recommendations on means to enhance collaboration if necessary.

4. To prepare a comprehensive, public report on the findings and recommendations of the Panel.

4.0 Activities Undertaken

In completing this review the Panel collected information from a number of sources and participated in the following activities:

1. Reviewed the February 26, 1990 report of the Y.E.S.S. Internal Review Committee.

2. Reviewed documentation forwarded by the complainants.

3. Completed two group interviews with the complainants.

4. Completed one group interview with the "beat patrolman" for the area, Constable Doug Green.

5. Completed one group interview with the external members of the Y.E.S.S. Internal Review Committee, Carol Ann Probert and Dennis Huculak.

6. Completed two group interviews with the Executive Director of the Shelter, Michael Farris.

7. Conducted on-site visits to the Shelter. During these visits the following tasks were undertaken:
   - a group interview with front-line staff
   - a group interview with management staff
   - a group interview with board members
   - interviews with current Shelter residents
   - a review of client and agency files.

8. Completed group interviews with front-line staff from Alberta Family and Social Services and the United Way of Edmonton and Area.

9. Conducted an open meeting with neighbourhood residents regarding their concerns with the Shelter.

10. Completed an interview with Mr. Alf Nobert, Director, Services to Children, Alberta Family and Social Services, regarding policies governing 16 and 17 year olds.

5.0 Introduction to Findings

During the course of this review the Panel was presented with a great amount of information. At times the information appeared to be inconsistent or contradictory. In order to proceed with the review, the Panel found it necessary to make some assumptions about the operation of the Shelter. The following section is an attempt to provide the reader with some of the dilemmas faced by the Panel in conducting the review and to articulate some of the assumptions made.

The purpose of the Youth Emergency Shelter Society is "to help homeless youth and troubled families overcome their crisis situation through the provision of emergency services, Shelter and other services" (Y.E.S.S. Policy Manual). During the review of the operation of the Shelter it became apparent to Panel members that confusion existed regarding the purpose or mandate of the Shelter. At times staff, community members, and other professionals held the perception that the shelter provided only emergency services to youth while at other times the common perception was that the Shelter provided services beyond that of an emergency nature.

The confusion surrounding the mandate of the Shelter is not unique to the operation of that agency but reflects a broader concern in our community regarding the most appropriate way to respond to young persons who are no longer under parental control, are experiencing crisis in their lives, and, in many cases, are ill equipped to handle the responsibilities of emerging adulthood.

The Alberta Child Welfare Act (1984) gives a young person 16 years of age or over the right to enter into an agreement with a director to receive support services. The young person must be found in need of protective services and be living independently of his or her guardian. This right to enter an agreement, independent of parental consent, reflects the "emerging adult" status of 16 and 17

year olds. On the other hand, protective services are traditionally associated with childhood, a dependent state in law and in fact. Therein lies a dilemma. Should 16 and 17 your olds be treated as children or as adults?

The Shelter has attempted to provide services to 16 and 17 year olds that "mandated" agencies are unable or unwilling to provide. During the review of the Shelter operation it became clear to the Panel that as gaps in services to 16 and 17 year olds widened, the Shelter extended their services. This ultimately contributed to the confusion surrounding the mandate of the agency.

For the purposes of this report the Panel believes it is necessary to clarify that the conclusions and recommendations identified in this report are based on the premise that the purpose of the Shelter is to provide emergency services and as such the majority of the recommendations pertain to the Crisis Assistance and Hostelling Program (CR.AS.H.).

It should also be clarified that for this review the Panel held the assumption that there is a need for the services provided by the Shelter. Feedback from community members, funders, Alberta Family and Social Services staff, Shelter staff and Shelter residents supported this view.

One of the findings in the February 1990 report prepared by the Y.E.S.S. Internal Review Committee was that Shelter staffing and programs require increased funding. Discussions with staff, residents, community members and other professional agencies during this review fully supported this finding and has led the Panel to adopt a similar position regarding the funding of the Shelter. Consequently, the conclusions and recommendations in this report were developed with the understanding that the Shelter is presently under-resourced. This factor contributed to a number of the problems experienced by the Shelter.

The time between the point at which the initial allegations were made, the completion of the Y.E.S.S. Internal Review Committee report and the time the Panel conducted its review requires some comment. The initial letter outlining the allegations made against the Shelter was dated December 7, 1989 and was based on incidents occurring primarily between October, 1988 and October, 1989. The Y.E.S.S. Internal Review Committee conducted their investigation and released a report in February, 1990. The review conducted by the Panel occurred primarily during the months of May and June 1990. During this review it became apparent to the Panel that some of the concerns earlier stated had already been addressed. Whether

these changes were in response to the allegations made against the Shelter, part of the Board's strategic plan or a result of natural process could not be determined. It should also be noted that the Shelter staff developed a report as follow-up to the Internal Review Committee report. From this report the Shelter has developed a draft action plan addressing the areas of (1) hiring (2) The Y.E.S.S. Grievance Procedure (3) Policies Procedures, Training, Education and Supervision (4) Definition of Client Group (5) Team Work Issues and (6) Community Relations. As a result of these ongoing changes the Panel felt it was important to recognize the progressive nature of the Shelter operation rather than perceiving the shelter as a static organization.

Finally, the Panel would like to make some comment regarding the completion of reviews on agencies of this nature. The Panel members recognize that the Shelter youth workers are dealing with youth in crisis, each with their own individual needs. Although it is expected that agencies have policies and guidelines to direct the operation of their organization, it is also understood that how a staff member responds to many of the day-to-day situations depends on judgement and the information available to them at the time. There are some generally accepted standards for child care practice and programs. However, detailed standards governing unique programs such as youth shelters do not exist in Alberta. As a consequence, each individual or group draws their own conclusions about the operation of the Shelter based on their personal backgrounds and/or professional backgrounds.

6.0 Observations, Conclusions and Recommendations

For the purposes of this report, the Panel has divided its observations, conclusions and recommendations into the following four categories: (1) Investigation & Analysis of Child Care Concerns; (2) Investigation & Analysis of Management Concerns; (3) Community Relationships with the Shelter; and (4) Relationship with Government and other community service agencies.

6.1 Investigation & Analysis of Child Care Concerns

Two former staff of the Shelter identified concerns about inappropriate management and child care practices at the Shelter. As a part of their presentation to the Panel, the former staff provided non-identifying information about 85 Shelter residents. In relation to each, they listed what they considered to be evidence of inadequate or inappropriate responses by Shelter management and staff to the actions of the youth.

To assess these allegations, the Panel randomly selected and reviewed a sample of files of youth who had received service from the Shelter during the time of employment of the two former staff; reviewed team meeting minutes from that period of time; interviewed a number of Shelter residents, and interviewed staff.

General Observations:

1. Most of the files reviewed indicated some Shelter youth came from families where there was a lengthy history of relationship problems. Only one of the youth from the samples came from an intact, two parent family.

Contact with natural family or guardians was attempted at the time of admission to the Shelter or within an acceptable time frame thereafter. However, given that a goal of the Shelter program is to reconcile youth with their families whenever possible, the Panel was rarely able to determine from the files reviewed whether such efforts were undertaken. From a somewhat different perspective, because of the number of youth served, because family reconciliation can be a lengthy process, and because there is specialized knowledge and skills associated with doing this type of work, the Panel questions whether the Shelter has a sufficient number of staff, and has staff with appropriate preparation, to do family reconciliation work.

2. Most of the files reviewed indicated the Shelter residents had multiple admissions to the Shelter.

Admission documentation was completed according to the prescribed polices and format, although missing information was not necessarily added during the duration of the resident's stay at the Shelter.

Information from previous admission or discharge documentation was sometimes not integrated with a new admission process, thus creating the impression of a unique event rather than an event informed by past experience. However, there was evidence of attempts to ensure continuity of key workers whenever possible.

3. Evident in most files reviewed are efforts to contact relevant professional and community resources on behalf of the Shelter residents. Also evident is a general lack of responsiveness to these contacts, particularly by the Department of Family and Social Services and by the Department of the Solicitor General. There was little evidence of

correspondence to, or information received from, external services. Formal consents signed by Shelter youth to enable the Shelter to request information from external sources were not always on file.

SAFETY OF YOUTH:

The file documentation reviewed provided numerous examples of incidents which, if not managed appropriately, would place Shelter youth at some risk of injury or exploitation.

The youth interviewed readily acknowledged occasions when, because of the reputation and/or behaviour of particular Shelter youth they felt unsafe. They also said this is not something unique to the Shelter environment but happens anytime there is a congregation of adolescents (e.g., at school). Additionally, these youth felt they had ready access to, and could rely on, the support of Shelter staff if the need arose.

When the Shelter residents were asked whether they would support a policy that would ban known trouble-makers from admission to the Shelter, generally the response was one of being unsure. One Shelter resident indicated she would not support such a policy. "Maybe when they ask to be re- admitted they are willing to change and to use the help that is here. Everyone deserves another chance."

Incident report documentation, and information provided by staff, clearly supported the contention that effective supervision of the Shelter youth was limited by the physical layout of the Shelter facility. As well, the conjoint operation of a crisis (CR.AS.H) and longer term (ST.A.R.T.) program created a situation where Shelter residents, living under the same roof, were dealt with according to different sets of rules and expectations which were not always consistently applied. This created confusion among staff, leaving the impression that some residents were able to "get away" with more than others.

While there are established procedures for all incident reports to be reviewed by supervisors and management, there was little on the files read by the Panel to indicate that follow-up always occurred.

Although most youth requesting service have been admitted to the Shelter, and although there is a considerable degree of tolerance for the behaviour of the Shelter youth, the Panel

obtained no evidence to support a belief that Shelter staff accept or condone behaviour that would place other youth, volunteers or themselves at risk. Nonetheless, it is apparent that not all staff have been comfortable with decisions to admit or readmit known trouble-makers; not all staff have felt heard in terms of their concerns about admissions and/or about inconsistencies in the approach to behaviour management; and not all staff have felt supported by their supervisors and management in their dealing with particular youth. It is the Panel's opinion these factors negatively affect the Shelter's capacity to be a place of safety for the youth it serves.

SEXUAL ACTIVITY:

The file records suggest that many of the youth receiving service at the Shelter have been sexually abused, that many have been or are sexually active, and that some have been involved in prostitution.

The Shelter does not condone sexual involvement between residents. The Shelter youth interviewed were all aware of this stand and indicated that in their experience the rule is consistently enforced. There was other information given to the Panel which suggested some inconsistency of staff response to incidents of sexual activity between Shelter residents. As well, it is clear that adequate monitoring of the youth has been confounded by the physical layout of the Shelter.

Given the prevalence of sexual activity and the potential for exploitation of youth at the Shelter, diligence in ensuring adequate health care support and counselling, and in ensuring that vulnerable youth are as safe as possible, is warranted. With respect to the former, the Shelter provides its residents with ready access to health and counselling resources. Evidence suggests the latter has not been attended to as effectively, but should improve with the building renovations which will enable more effective monitoring of the youth. A further step suggested by the Panel is that where applicable, file documentation identify specific strategies that will be used to respond to the Shelter resident who is sexually active or who is susceptible to exploitation.

CRIMINAL AND ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR:

Examination of the documentation in the files sampled indicates appropriate screening and monitoring of the Shelter youth regarding possible criminal activity. Good judgement appeared

to be exercised in contacting police services and Solicitor General staff. However, the Shelter staff did experience inconsistent response from members of the Solicitor General's Department in relation to their requests for follow-up on probation needs. Nonetheless, there was no evidence to support a contention that Shelter staff or management condone illegal acts.

Given the perception of the community immediately surrounding the Shelter that Shelter residents are responsible for a disproportionate incidence of antisocial and criminal activity in the area, it is the Panel's belief that the Board and management of the Shelter have paid insufficient attention to the complaints of nearby businesses and neighbours. Several incident reports reviewed reported threats toward, harassment of, and interference with neighbours. Sanctions and follow-up did not appease those affected nor did it appear to significantly alter the conduct of youth at the Shelter.

The Panel believes a contributing factor to this problem is a lack of planned daytime and evening activity for Shelter youths. One of the young people interviewed by the Panel was strongly supportive of the Shelter providing programs for its residents, acknowledging her predilection for involvement in delinquent activity if she is faced with too much unstructured time.

Having made the judgement that the Shelter must pay more attention to the complaints of nearby neighbours and businesses, the Panel also finds it necessary to comment on the community's responsibility in this area. During the review it became evident that the neighbouring businesses and residents had a tendency to assume all youth causing trouble in the neighbourhood were residents of the Shelter. Other information presented to the Panel indicates this is not the case. Therefore, it is the opinion of the Panel that the community has a responsibility to determine whether or not a youth causing trouble is a Shelter resident, then deal with each situation accordingly.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE:

The file documentation reviewed suggests that many of the youth served by the Shelter have a history of drug and alcohol use. The documentation also indicates there is episodic use by some youth following their admission. Staff do not tolerate this behaviour and in the files read by the Panel, appropriate

remedial action was taken.

Shelter staff receive training in the area of drug and alcohol abuse. There was evidence on the files reviewed of referral to, and consultation with, professional resources on behalf of youth.

HEALTH CARE:

There appear to be consistent efforts to obtain a health history from the youth at the time they are admitted to the Shelter. Files are organized in a way which makes it difficult to readily access this information. As well, with Shelter youth who have been admitted on multiple occasions, a health history is taken each time with no attempt made to integrate the information on one location in the file.

While there is ready access to health care professionals to deal with routine health matters, the Panel obtained considerable evidence of the difficulties faced by Shelter staff in accessing services for Shelter residents with mental health problems and particularly for residents who are suicidal.

The Panel is concerned about all aspects associated with the Shelter's administration of medication to Shelter youth. As indicated in its February 1990, Report of the Y.E.S.S. Internal Review Committee, the Board recognizes a need for the Shelter policies and procedures concerning correct dispensing of medication to be expanded. Additionally, the Board acknowledges a need for routine monitoring of staff compliance with all policies and procedures regarding the management and dispensing of medication. The Panel strongly endorses implementation of such a monitoring system. From the files reviewed, documentation concerning the dispensing of medication appeared incomplete and there was no evidence of any internal control processes to double check what was or was not being done.

UNPROFESSIONAL CHILD CARE PRACTICES:

The Shelter has attempted to create an appropriate professional framework for the delivery of a quality youth care services. The policy and procedures manual, which appears to be updated as necessary, provides a good orientation to expectations of staff, management, and Board. However, the file review does highlight some inconsistent practices, communication problems,

and program deficiencies (in staffing, supervision, and facility). There is evidence of confusion and conflicting direction in the management of very challenging youth, which is compounded significantly by various interpretations by front line staff of their role and/or mandate in serving this population. There is an expressed need for improved team work and better conflict resolution mechanisms.

In the context of the resource limitations and the characteristics of the target population, the Shelter manages its daily challenges in an acceptable manner. Enhanced relationships with critical community and professional resources, particularly Family and Social Services and Solicitor General departments, and separation of emergent, hostel type services from assessment and rehabilitative components, would address many of the systemic and community concerns.

On the basis of the sample of files reviewed, an examination of team meeting minutes, and a review of the Shelter policies, it cannot be concluded that the Shelter is either unprofessional or unsafe in its delivery of services to youth. However, the allegations by the former staff do highlight many areas which require management and Board attention.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. That the Shelter (perhaps with the assistance of a records management expert) review and revise the format of its "client files" to improve information storage and retrieval, and to more effectively support staff activity on behalf of the youth being served. In doing this it is suggested:

- there be some form of "face sheet" that contains key information about each youth, which contains a summary of key events or decisions respecting that youth, and which can be updated with any succeeding admission;

- there be a health record which is readily accessible; which contains all known health information and which contains the record of all medication prescribed and administered;

- there be a method of recording identified youth needs, of describing how these needs will be addressed (including what the youth will do to meet his/her own needs), and of describing whether the needs were met;

- there be a requirement, and method , for supervisors and management to record follow-up activity vis a vis incident reports.

2. That the Shelter have an on-site line supervisor on each child care shift to provide staff with consistent guidance and support, clear communication of service expectations, and a problem-solving mechanism for both administrative and child care issues. This will also enhance consistency of interpretation and application of agency philosophy, policies and procedures for each shift and between shifts.

3. That the Shelter institute a specific policy requiring file documentation describing what approach will be used to support youth who are known to be sexually active and/or to be vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

4. That the Shelter follow through with its stated intent to expand Shelter policies and procedures regarding the correct dispensing of medication, and to institute a monitoring process to ensure staff compliance with all policies and procedures regarding the management and dispensing of medication.

5. That the Shelter involve the Victorian Order of Nurses (VON) and the Local Board of Health to assist in a review of their health care program as it relates to meeting the health needs of adolescents.

Additionally, that the Shelter enlist the involvement of a physician, who has a particular interest and expertise in providing health care to adolescents, in its ongoing program.

6. That the Shelter seek the assistance of Alberta Mental Health to negotiate and establish protocols with one or more of Edmonton's active treatment hospitals regarding treatment of Shelter youth with mental health needs and particularly those residents who are suicidal.

7. That the Shelter institute:

- an assessment approach that will readily assist identification of Shelter youth needs and that would be completed at intake;

- expanded daytime and evening programming that would include both short-term programs directed to meeting youth needs (e.g., job assessment, job preparation courses), and recreation activities.

8. That the Shelter approach Edmonton Community and Family Services for assistance with family mediation and family reconciliation activities.

9. That the Shelter increase the ratio of Shelter staff to residents; establish 25 as the maximum number of CR.AS.H residents; ensure that staff qualifications are consistent with expected roles and responsibilities.

In conjunction with the above, it is further recommended:

- that the Edmonton Region, Alberta Family and Social Services, ensure other accommodation options are available to youth when the Shelter is at full occupancy;

- that the Edmonton Region, Alberta Family and Social Services, the United Way of Edmonton and Area, and Edmonton Community and Family Services meet with the Board to review the funding needs of the agency.

6.2 Investigation & Analysis of Management Concerns

Observations:

The Shelter staff, both paid and volunteer, has demonstrated a strong commitment to the needs of the client group this organization represents.

The Shelter management is characterized by the leadership needed to ensure its continued existence and growth for the past eight years. However, this dedication and commitment to meeting the needs of those 16 and 17 year old youth who come to the Shelter, combined with a lack of financial resources, has placed some strains and limitations on the operation of the Shelter. It is the impression of the Panel that for the most part the Shelter is aware of its limitations and was prepared to make the changes necessary to make the most out of the resources available to them.

The Panel is aware that some significant changes in the agency's management approach has occurred during the past 8 - 10 months. Some of these changes are the result of the strategic planning process that the Shelter is currently involved in and some are probably the result of the public events and concerns encountered during the past eight months. Of particular interest is the change in the "partnership" roles of the Shelter staff and the Board.

Role of the Board:

Historically, the Board's role has largely been that of providing support to the Executive Director and staff. The Board vested much authority and power with respect to the operations of the Shelter in the Executive Director. Recently the Board has begun to redefine its role and to undertake more of a leadership role publicly.

Based on interviews with Shelter staff and Board, the current review has resulted in a closer working relationship between the Board and the staff. The Shelter Board and staff indicated that although being the target of the review has at times been uncomfortable, the review has provided the Board with an opportunity to learn more about the day to day operations of the Shelter and to make improvements where necessary.

The Panel members noted that although staff and Board members indicated a closer relationship as a result of the investigations of the past 6 - 8 months, no formalized mechanism exists by which staff can address the Board directly. The Board may wish to institute more formalized mechanisms by which staff can address the Board on an on-going basis.

The Shelter residents interviewed by the Panel reported that they welcomed the chance to express their opinion about the Shelter operation. The Shelter residents indicated they were seldom provided with the opportunity to express their opinions about the Shelter and would be interested in being involved in such a process on a regular basis. Considering this information, the Board should examine mechanisms available to Shelter residents for providing input into the operation of the Shelter.

The Shelter has a formal grievance procedure for its personnel, volunteers, and for Shelter residents. Because the initial letter of complaint forwarded by the former Shelter employees made reference to the grievance procedure, the Panel members

felt it was necessary to review this process. The Panel members agree that as the grievance procedure exists there is a possibility that an appellant may feel that he/she was not provided with an adequate process to express concerns. As the procedure is currently structured the final point of representation by an appellant is to the Human Resources Committee - a subcommittee of the Board. It is the opinion of the Panel that the final decision regarding a grievance should be made by the Board or by the Executive of the Board.

Again it is noted that in the Draft Action Plan prepared by the Shelter there is reference to the weaknesses of the grievance procedure and plans are underway to address some of these limitations.

Role of the Executive Director:

Historically, the Executive Director of the Shelter assumed the primary leadership role with respect to the Shelter's relationship with the community at large and with respect to the operation of the Shelter. The Executive Director had become the chief spokesperson for the Shelter, its programs and its Board of Directors. Because the Shelter has needed to generate additional sources of revenue, this activity has also become the responsibility of the Executive Director. During this review a concern frequently raised is the extent to which the management of the Shelter has suffered as a result of the many responsibilities of the Executive Director.

The Board and Executive Director acknowledge that the dual roles of the Executive Director are becoming increasingly more difficult to sustain. As part of the strategic planning processes for this agency, the Shelter will be initiating an external review of the Shelter management structure.

Role of the Management Team:

The current Shelter Management Team consists of the following positions:

Executive Director
Program Manager
Community Resources Manager
Supervisor, Crisis and Community Services (CR.AS.H. Supervisor)
Supervisor, Transitional Services (ST.A.R.T. Supervisor)

The position of the ST.A.R.T. supervisor is a new addition to the Shelter management team. The addition of this second program supervisor is perceived by both staff and management to have resulted in an improvement to the overall functioning of the Shelter and is specifically of benefit to line staff.

Information obtained during staff interviews suggests that the management team works well together and are supportive of the Executive Director.

It is the perception of staff that, in the past, they were not always supported by management . The management team has made some significant improvements through its sessions with line staff to foster the empowerment of line staff in dealing with sometimes a difficult client group.

Line Staff Perceptions:

Shelter staff demonstrate a high level of commitment to the Shelter and to the clients they serve. Because of this, the recent public allegations and controversy have had a strong personal effect on each staff member.

Line staff do perceive a number of positive changes to have occurred as a result of the recent investigation. For example, the management staff have been able to foster a greater willingness by line staff to deal openly with child care and administrative issues and a closer relationship between line staff, management and Board members has developed.

There is a strong feeling by line staff that supervision of Shelter residents will be enhanced by the physical changes taking place at the Shelter and by the separation of the ST.A.R.T. and CR.AS.H. programs.

There is a strong agreement by all staff that the Y.E.S.S. is under-funded for the service needs it provides.

Mandate/Philosophy:

It was stated previously that the purpose of the Shelter is "to help homeless youth and troubled families overcome their crisis situation through the provision of emergency services, Shelter and other services." The issue for the Shelter appears to be a lack of understanding and acceptance of this purpose by some Shelter staff and community members. While many of the staff and community members understand the purpose of the Shelter is

to provide emergency services, the Panel heard from other staff and community members who believe the purpose of the Shelter is to provide services of a long term treatment nature. These staff are frustrated by their inability to provide "treatment" type of services and expressed concerns that the Shelter was not providing adequate services to Shelter residents. The confusion regarding the purpose of the Shelter leaves some community members with unrealistic expectations of the Shelter which ultimately leads them to believe the Shelter is not doing its job.

Policies & Procedures:

The Shelter has developed a comprehensive policy manual. It is the opinion of the Panel that the issues encountered by Shelter staff were not about whether there are sufficient policies but rather (1) inconsistent interpretation of policies, and (2) whether it is possible to carry out the policy under current conditions (eg. staff complement, responsiveness of other agencies etc). It is the opinion of the Panel that this problem will not be solved through more extensive development of policy, but rather through improved supervision and education of staff.

Because of the variety of needs exhibited by the residents of the Shelter, the Shelter has always attempted to deal with each child on an individual basis. This has some times led to apparent discrepancies and contradictions about how one client is treated as opposed to another. It is apparent that the agency has found it difficult to apply policies and procedures that are acceptable to all of the above-mentioned stakeholders under conditions of:

- poor physical layout
- inadequate staff resources
- inability to operate two such different programs as C.R.A.S.H. and S.T.A.R.T. from an inadequate location.

Conclusions:

The Panel is left with the impression that the Shelter Board, management team, staff and volunteers are committed and dedicated individuals. Over the years the Shelter has undergone many changes that have required changes in the roles of the Executive Director and the Board. A more thorough review of the roles of the Board, Executive Director and

management team is required and the Board has started this process.

There are several internal issues such as access of Shelter staff to the Board and opportunities for Shelter residents to have input into the operation of the Shelter that were brought to the attention of the Panel and the Board should review these issues.

It is clear to the Panel that some people, both internal and external to the Shelter do not have an understanding or acceptance of the purpose of the Shelter and some education and clarification needs to be done around this issue. In addition, a mechanism for enhancing consistent interpretation of policy and procedures by staff should be implemented.

Recommendations:

1. The Panel supports the plans of the Board currently to initiate an operational review of the Shelter's management structure using an external facilitator. The Panel suggests that the review adopt a participatory approach to the review and involve the major stakeholders for the Shelter (eg. Shelter staff, Alberta Family and Social Services representative, United Way representative). Furthermore, the Panel recommends that the following issues be included in the review: (1) type of organizational structure that is best suited for aiding the Shelter to achieve its goals; (2) clarification of the governance role of the Board and the management role of the Executive Director and; (3) a review of formal processes available to Shelter staff to access the Board.

2. That the Shelter institute changes to the human resources grievance procedure to allow the Board to make the final decision regarding a grievance action.

3. That the Board take part in a "Board development" exercise such as those provided by the Volunteer Action Centre, Grant MacEwan College or the Social Planning Council.

4. That the residents of the Shelter be provided with a formalized mechanism to provide feedback on the day to day activities of the Shelter to help the Shelter in their planning for the needs of the youth living there.

5. The Panel endorses the Shelter's commitment to undergo another Peer Review through the Alberta Association of Services for Children and Families within the next year.

6.3 Community Relationships with the Shelter

Preamble

Some residents within a three or four block radius of the Shelter have taken considerable exception to the Shelter being located within their community. As stated in the terms-of-reference, "some residents ..... view its physical location and the activities of its clients as a threat and liability to the safe, peaceful existence of their neighbourhood." This has been expressed primarily to City Council through the process whereby a rezoning application was sought by the Shelter in the spring of 1990 to allow for necessary renovation and secure future land-use status. The "objectives" for the Panel, on this basis, therefore included a "consideration of the community context of the Shelter program and to identify and review with the Board concerns expressed ....."

Process

The panel had access to the proceedings and written documents to City Council on the Shelter's rezoning application, media comments on community concerns and some personal contacts with the key community spokespersons. In addition, a publicized community/panel meeting was held on June 28, 1990, where four people attended to express their opinions about the Shelter. The following observations and recommendations stem from the foregoing events.

Background

The Shelter was first established at its present location in 1982 by a group of concerned citizens who felt there was a need for a temporary shelter for 16 or 17 year olds who, for a variety of reasons, were homeless. As a non-profit community-based agency, the Shelter leased a city building, which was originally a fire hall and which was subsequently used for other purposes over the years.

While not entirely structurally suitable as a shelter, the location was deemed appropriate, and the building was initially licensed for twelve youth. As the program matured and the need increased, the Shelter was eventually licensed for 38 youth

which is the case today. During the last five or six years, through program evolution and the expressed needs of youth, two kinds of programs have developed. These are CR.AS.H., which is the short-term, crisis, transitory housing for youth, who are recently homeless (average stay seven days) and ST.A.R.T., which is for youth who are in the process of attempting to establish themselves in school, the workforce or in some other more permanent situation (average stay seven weeks).

The Board has been planning for some time to separate these two programs and hopes to accomplish this by July 1991, when a new 10-14 bed group home for ST.A.R.T. will have been constructed in some other community. This will leave the CR.AS.H. program in the present location and City Council, in making its final rezoning decision of May 29, 1990, approved it for a maximum of 29 youth after the two programs are separated. The Shelter is now in the process of making considerable modifications to the interior and exterior of the building, both to make it more suitable for CR.AS.H. as well as more visually appealing to the community. It should be noted that the Shelter purchased the building and property from the City in late 1989 and is now in an owner's position to undertake extensive renovations with view to long-term occupancy.

It is also significant that, because of community concerns since the fall of 1989, about a perceived crime increase attributable to residents of the Shelter, the Police Department located a "beat constable" in the area. Discussions with the constable, Shelter staff and community members indicate his presence is appreciated by all and is making a positive impact. While his patrol area is much larger than the Shelter vicinity, in the short-term, the constable is spending a good portion of his time on Shelter-related issues. In May 1990 in a report to City Council, the Police Department indicated that, notwithstanding the fact that some Shelter youth commit criminal acts, the rate of crime is higher in 22 other communities than it is in the Shelter area. Without minimizing neighbours' concerns about Shelter residents, it also stressed that most crime is committed by people not resident within the community.

Community Concerns

The community feels the Shelter was parachuted into its area eight years ago without adequate notice or consultation and has, since its opening, increased its size and thus the volume of young people coming and going within their neighbourhood.

Because of the unsettled nature of most of the youth and that of friends and acquaintances, their occasional anti-social behaviour or simply "hanging around", some community members - particularly older residents - feel harassed, abused, powerless, unsafe and afraid.

The community supports the ST.A.R.T. program but considers the CR.AS.H. program unacceptable because of its large number of transient youth and their short period of stay. Neighbours feel they could get to know ST.A.R.T. residents who stay for longer periods and who might benefit from community relationships and resources. CR.AS.H. residents, on the other hand, are only there temporarily, are the most disruptive to the community, and have little opportunity to benefit from neighbourhood contact.

The community suggests that, unless the volume can be substantially reduced and behaviours more closely controlled, CR.AS.H. will always be negatively intrusive and incompatible with the neighbourhood adjacent to the Shelter. This is due to the large numbers, the short stay and the feeling that Shelter staff can do little to control the behaviour of these youth once outside of the building confines.

The community does consider the situation to have improved during the last few months, attributing part of this to the beat policeman and increased vigilance by Shelter staff. Of particular ongoing concern, however, is rowdy, disruptive behaviour within the community at night, perceived inadequate assessment and early planning for youth, no outside-of-building supervision, apparent lack of structured programming for youth during the day and evening and a general lack of respect from youth with regard to common courtesy and conduct towards neighbours with whom they share the neighbourhood.

Finally, the community does not feel it has had good understanding of, and communication with, the Shelter since its inception. When initiated, most residents were not aware of the program, it expanded without consultation and some individual contacts over the years on particular incidents have been judged to be cool or unresponsive.

It is the perception of neighbourhood residents and businesses, that in the past, there has been insufficient attention given to their complaints about specific activity of a nuisance nature if not obviously illegal. Several incident reports on Shelter residents' files involved threats to, harassment of,

and interference with neighbours. Sanctions and follow-up by Shelter staff did not appease those affected nor did it appear to influence the conduct of the Shelter residents. The availability of a "beat constable" should improve the response to citizen complaints and reinforce the efforts of the Shelter staff.

Both the "beat constable" and the Shelter staff admit that at times Shelter residents do become involved in illegal or nuisance type of activity within the neighbourhood. However, the staff question the degree to which the Shelter residents contribute to such behaviours. It is the perception of the Shelter staff that there is a tendency for the neighbouring residents and businesses to assume that all youth who "hang around" or are in trouble, are residents of the Shelter, when this is not the case.

Conclusions

Given the nature of the Shelter and the homeless youth it serves, the Panel considers that its present location is not unsuitable for the CR.AS.H. program. It is desirably away from the inner-city, within an accessible residential community, but also adjacent to a busy commercial street, public transportation, and necessary support services. The Shelter also owns the building, has existed within the community for eight years, and is in the midst of extensive renovations to render the physical facility safer and more suitable for CR.AS.H. It has received appropriate City zoning approvals for that purpose. The Panel furthermore fully endorses the separation of the CR.AS.H. and ST.A.R.T. programs in distinct locations.

With these realities, and also acknowledging that the Shelter would have implications for any community within which it is located, the key issue becomes "How can it be best operated with positive rather than negative impacts on its host community?" To this end, the following recommendations are made:

Recommendations

1. That the Shelter pay greater attention to improving levels of understanding and creating an amicable, responsive relationship with the adjacent community that will better serve all parties. This should include tangible ways and

means whereby youth can interact positively and helpfully within the community.

2. The Panel supports the decision reached during the Community/Shelter mediation meetings to develop a standing committee of Community/Shelter representatives including the "beat constable" to serve as a problem solving forum addressing concerns of mutual interest. The Panel encourages the Board to continue to take a leadership role in establishing the standing committee and recommends that the community adjacent to the Shelter select appropriate representatives to join the standing committee by the end of August, 1990.

3. The Panel supports the efforts of the Board to renovate the Shelter to improve the visual attractiveness of the building to the community and, where possible, to physically design features that will minimize negative interaction between Shelter residents and the adjacent community.

4. Despite efforts of the Shelter to provide some level of supervision and surveillance of Shelter residents while outside the confines of the Shelter, the community continues to express concerns about the negative impact the behaviour of Shelter residents (outside of the Shelter) has on this neighbourhood. The Panel recommends that resolutions to this problem be sought at the standing Community/Shelter committee.

5. That the Shelter develop a component to its orientation program for incoming residents that deals with the community and expected conduct and attitude towards that community while in its midst.

6.4 Relationship With Government and Other Community Service Agencies

Observations

During the extensive review processes undergone by the Shelter, concern has been raised about working relationships with Alberta Family and Social Services (A.F.S.S.), the Provincial Government department responsible for Child Protection and Social Allowance services to 16 and 17 year old youth. A.F.S.S., as represented by its Edmonton Region, carries out its Child Protection mandate under the Child

Welfare Act and provides Social allowance services (basic needs for shelter, food, clothing, etc.) under the Social Development Act.

Given these statutory responsibilities, the role of the Edmonton Region is integrally linked to that of the Shelter, a community agency providing emergency services to youth who are frequently at risk and, in all cases, have short term basic needs that must be met. The Edmonton Region is a funder of the CR.AS.H. program and also licenses the Shelter under the provincial Social Care Facilities Licensing Act. Many of the referrals to the Shelter come directly from the Edmonton Region and a substantial number of the youth already have a legal status under the Child Welfare Act when they use the Shelter's services.

In practice, it is often difficult to determine when a young person, living independently, is in need of protective services, or can be assisted adequately under the less intrusive provisions of the Social Allowance Program or voluntarily funded services. In the case of youth using the Shelter, their lives are frequently in crisis and their needs are typically such that only a total marshalling of community resources stands a chance of helping them overcome past and present deficits, with a view towards achieving responsible adulthood. Because of the complexities of providing service to this age group, each young person's needs must be dealt with individually. These factors, along with the volume of youth using the Shelter (550 - 600 per year), demand a network of well coordinated Government and community services, readily accessible, and closely linked to the Shelter.

The CR.AS.H. Program at the Shelter provides short-term, crisis intervention services for the young persons admitted. All require some immediate assessment of their situation and the next steps are based on individual needs and circumstances. In some cases, a return to the family home is negotiated. For others, more detailed assessment is required and a referral is made to services designed to assist the Shelter youth to ultimately live independently and successfully in the community. Still others use the Shelter for a day or two and move on, seemingly without a great need for additional services. Some youth return to the Shelter for several stays and, in these cases, it is evident that appropriate referrals are not being made, the young people involved are choosing not to follow-up with the services

available, or the services presented are not adequate to meet their needs.

With the diverse personal needs presented by Shelter residents, and with the high volume of admissions, it is evident that the Shelter requires quick access and strong working relationships with a wide range of community services. These include, but are not limited to, child protection and social allowance services, health and mental health services, vocational and educational programs, community accommodation and access to the complete span of pre-employment and employment resources.

The key to success for the CR.AS.H. program is some alleviation of the immediate crisis that brings a young person to the Shelter, a preliminary assessment of needs, and an appropriate referral to a Government and/or community agency for necessary services. All of this must be done quickly because the program is only designed for short-term stays and the number of admissions is high.

It is the view of the Panel that the Shelter has made attempts to establish the necessary working relationships in the service community but more needs to be done to overcome its somewhat isolated position in the broader service system. The inter-service coordination necessary to make the CR.AS.H. program a success requires a strong network of support to the Shelter from the relevant Government and community agencies. This overall support appears to be lacking, including that being received from the Edmonton Region of A.F.S.S. The Shelter, for its part, must place more emphasis on developing and maintaining strong working relationships with appropriate service providers in the community.

In strengthening these ties, it is important that services not be duplicated. For example, in the area of assessment, the Shelter should negotiate with other service providers for comprehensive assessment services (e.g. pre-employment, life skills) rather than develop its own.

As a concluding comment to this section, the Panel sees the Shelter as a program that should be highly involved with other service providers, linking youth in crisis with necessary services. Given the needs of the youth admitted, a well-coordinated network of comprehensive services is essential to the Shelter's services.

Recommendations

1. That the Shelter establish a permanent inter-agency coordinating committee to develop and maintain the appropriate network of services required by the youth at the Shelter. This committee should meet at least every two months and have representation from the relevant Provincial Government departments, the City of Edmonton, and appropriate community agencies. Membership should be made up from the management or senior program levels of the organizations involved.

2. That the Edmonton Region of Alberta Family and Social Services assign two staff, at the Casework Supervisor level, as liaison persons to the Shelter. One of these supervisors should represent the Child Protection program, the other should be assigned from the Social Allowance program (preferably a specialist with 16 and 17 year old youth). This liaison work should focus on the day-to-day coordination of services to Shelter youth who are already receiving Edmonton Region services, or are candidates for those services.

3. That the Solicitor General's Department consider assigning a staff member as a liaison person to the Shelter to better meet the needs of those youth living at the Shelter who also have involvement with the Solicitor General's Department.

4. That Alberta Family and Social Services review its relevant legislation, policies and practices for 16 and 17 year old youth who are "at risk" or "in need" to ensure that its services are appropriate, responsive and consistently applied in meeting the needs of this target population. It is further recommended that, in order to achieve improved integration of services, Alberta Family and Social Services undertake to involve in its review all those Provincial Departments that also provide services to this group of youth.

5. That the Panel members remain available to the Board to assist the various persons responsible for the implementation of recommendations identified in this report.

APPENDIX A

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Y.E.S.S. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT PANEL

BACKGROUND: On December 13, 1989, the Regional Director, Family and Social Services, Edmonton Region, received a letter from former employees of the Youth Emergency Shelter bringing to his attention their concerns about the operation of the Shelter. Both former employees of the Shelter detailed concerns about "unprofessional child care practices", "inadequate client control"," a high degree of criminal activity on the part of clients", "inability to provide a place of safety and refuge for youth in crisis", "child abuse and neglect", and other unacceptable practices.

On January 2, 1990 the Regional Director wrote the President of the Y.E.S.S. Board of Directors, indicating he had received correspondence from former employees expressing concerns about the Y.E.S.S. program. The Regional Director indicated the review and investigation of these concerns was within the "purview and mandate of the board". Through further discussions between the board and the Regional Director, a review committee consisting of four board members and two external representatives was formed to investigate the concerns of the two former staff members.

The review committee completed an investigation and prepared a report in response to the Regional Director's January 2, 1990 letter which integrated findings and recommendations of all reviewers and which was co-signed by all parties to the review. On February 28, 1990 this report was released to the public.

Because some concerns remained regarding the Shelter's operation, and as a mechanism to assist the Shelter to implement changes, the Regional Director created a five member program development panel. The panel was expected to work with the board in determining exactly where the problems were, developing action plans to deal with the problems, and then ensuring the implementation of those actions.

Concurrently the community has recently become concerned about the operations of the Shelter and has expressed its displeasure through the media and to City Council.

PROBLEM STATEMENT: Y.E.S.S. has been subject to recent criticism by two former employees as to the appropriateness of its operations. Some residents of the community in which it is located view its physical location and the activities of its clients as a threat and liability to the safe, peaceful existence of their neighbourhood. As a result the public is finding it difficult to understand the operations and program methods of the Y.E.S.S. and the relationship between Y.E.S.S. and the community.

GOAL: To examine the operations of Y.E.S.S. with particular reference to expressed concerns about services provided to clients and concerns about the existence of the agency within the community in which it is located. To express opinions and recommendations that will assist the Y.E.S.S. Board, the community and the various stakeholders to provide an effective service for the target population.

OBJECTIVES:

1. To ensure a thorough analysis and investigation of concerns raised by the former employees and review the subsequent actions of the Board of Directors.

2. To consider the community context of the Y.E.S.S. program and to identify and review with the board concerns expressed by other stakeholders (funders, community agencies, neighbours, officials of the City of Edmonton).

3. To review the working relationship between Family and Social Services and the Y.E.S.S. program, including an analysis of the needs, appropriateness of referrals, etc. and to make recommendations on means to enhance collaboration if necessary.

4. To prepare a comprehensive, public report on the findings and recommendations of the panel.

METHODOLOGY:

1. To review the February 26, 1990 report of the review committee.

2. To review documentation forwarded by complainants and to interview these former employees of Y.E.S.S. with respect to their concerns and allegations.

3. To interview members of the internal review committee (board members and external representatives).

4. To receive reports from the Board on their action plans and implementation process.

5. To hold at least one session with residents of the community surrounding the Shelter to listen to their concerns, observations, and suggestions.

6. To interview the Executive Director and staff as appropriate.

7. To visit the facility and to interview residents.

8. To interview staff of Family and Social Services, United Way staff and volunteers with regard to the working relationship with Y.E.S.S.

9. To interview officials of the City of Edmonton with respect to issues raised by complainants and neighbours (e.g., City Police, Community and Family Services).

10. To prepare a report by June 30, 1990.

11. To publicly release the report and to ensure all relevant stakeholders are informed of the panel's findings and recommendations.

12. The chairperson will be the public spokesperson for the panel.

MEMBERSHIP: Denis Bell, Regional Director, Edmonton Region, Alberta Family and Social Services (Chairman)

Hillel Boroditsky, Executive Director, United Way of Edmonton and Area

Ary DeMoor, President, Youth Emergency Shelter Society Board

John Lackey, General Manager, Community and Family Services

John Mould, Northen Alberta Director, Children's Advocate

Bill Winship, Manager, Services to Persons with Disabilities, Family and Social Services

Joni Morrison O'Hara, Program Planner, Alberta Family and Social Services